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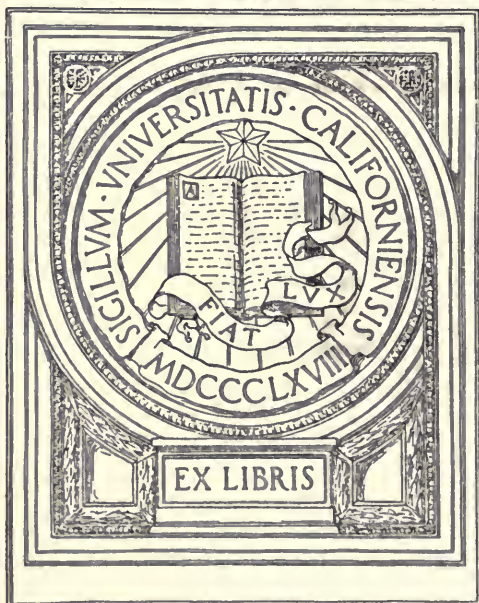


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Saint Francis, Saint Scraggles and
Saint James.

by
John Milton Scott.

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SAINT FRANCIS
SAINT SCRAGGLES
AND SAINT JAMES



JOHN MILTON SCOTT

SAINT FRANCIS SAINT SCRAGGLES AND SAINT JAMES

BY
JOHN MILTON SCOTT

Author of
"Kindly Light," "I Am,"
"The Grail," Etc.

Perhaps it may turn out a sang.
Perhaps, turn out a sermon.—BURNS.



RADIANT LIFE PRESS
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TO
GEORGE WHARTON JAMES
IN LOVE WITH HIS LOVE FOR ALL LIVES THAT LIVE,
BE IT WILD OR TAME,
BE IT BIRD OR BEAST OR MAN,
BE IT CHRIST OR GOD
WHOSE JOYOUS LIFE EMBOSOMS AND LIVES
WITH ALL OTHER LIVES,
THIS SERMON IN SONG,
WITHOUT HIS PERMISSION,
FROM HIS FRIEND,
JOHN MILTON SCOTT.



On what far highways must journey feet
Sent from God's heart on our earth to meet?



SAINT FRANCIS SAINT SCRAGGLES AND SAINT JAMES

I.

SAINT FRANCIS, Saint Scraggles and Saint James!
To each on my altar a candle flames.

Saint Francis, a monk, of the centuried fame;
Saint Scraggles, a sparrow which fitted her name;

Saint James, a mountain-like-measured man,
Whom sometimes I call El Capitan

After the mountain he loves so well,
And which takes his measure, the wise ones tell.

II.

Saint Francis was born where Assisi smiles
On vineyards whose purple the heart beguiles,

Making it think of Him, the Vine,
Who gives His blood in the Holy Wine,

That the Holy Ghost in perpetual fire
Burn out of the soul every base desire.

III.

Saint James opened his Norman eyes
Where the blue of the Saxon haunts the skies ;

Where, with rippling wings, the lark upruns
To sing the souls out of English suns,

Dropping them over the wide, green meads
In notes that fall like some sower's seeds,

That they hallow the hearts of the English boys
With regardful reverence for all bird-joys,

Making each life which the wing-flight wears
As holy as altars from which lift prayers.

IV.

Saint Scraggles was born in Syracuse
Where the lake laughs green and the sky smiles blues,

Where through the uglying dust is seen
The beauty of trees with refreshing green ;—

Came through an egg 'neath a bird-warm breast ;—
But a storm-fate tumbled her out of the nest,—

Out of the nest on the cold, wet ground,
Where a kinder than storms the wrecked bird found,—

Out of the nest which was blown apart,
She tumbled into Saint James's heart.

V.

Out of the mystery gates of birth
Came forth these three to hallow our earth.

Though leagues apart their birth-towns be,
And raging between them wild leagues of sea,

And wilder centuries dividing their years;
Yet are they one in my love that cheers

When the Christ of Love in joy is heard
Voicing His life in beast or bird.

As out of Life's wonder and mystery,
With beauty and joy, come these happy three

Into my heart, whose thoughts brood wrongs,
They bless it and make it fit for songs.

VI.

Saint Francis, you know, was the preacher of birds,
And preached to them love in its gospel words;

And his monks he bad the good news preach,
That the Love of God is a love for each;

As man's burden of sin each wild life bears,
In man's redemption each wild life shares;

And all wild things, wearing wings or feet,
To the Heart of God in Christ are sweet.

VII.

So flocked all birds to his boughs to hear;
The wolves and the foxes, also, near.

All, all! were under his spell of love
While the dear monk spake in tones of the dove,

And saw that his gospel had Pentecost
As it burned in all, not a wild soul lost.

The wolf and the lamb together played ;
The hawk and the dove in one love prayed ;

And sang they in chorus to Christ, their Lord,
Not a note left out, and no discord.

The wolf's voice toned like an organ pipe ;
And the hawk sang sweet as are berries ripe ;

While the monk's voice led in an angel-tone ;
And God sang, too, from His Great White Throne.

All the earth was stilled, all the earth was filled
With that love which God at first had willed.

VIII.

Lo ! there comes about the good saint's brow
A circle of bird-wings, haloing now ;

The red and the gold, the brown and the gray
In the bright of love and its joy outray.

“No more will slay or beak or tooth,
For the good monk's words are the gospel truth,”

They circling sing as the saint's rapt eyes
Sees the Christ's glad face behind the skies ;

And leading them all went Saint Mockingbird,
For he heavened in song each wild note heard ;

And upon Saint Francis's heaving breast
The sparrows with hymns of rapture rest

In memory of one in whose song the tryst
Was kept by God with His lonely Christ.

IX.

When the Galilee sparrow to Christ had sung,
It seemed God's silence had found a tongue

To say that the earth is lying yet
In the Bosom of Love, no need to fret;

There are no least wings that droop in death
Beyond the breathings of Love's sweet breath;

In all the earth no littlest one
Through the shadowed way alone has gone;

The Eternal Father meaneth our earth
To enwomb all lives for a blessed birth;—

O sparrow! to Him you sang that day,
This in my heart, this holy lay,—

That without the Father no least of us all
Can beneath death's arrow in agony fall.

X.

In many a heart that song still sings
Gentling to brothers of feet and wings,

To make loving kindness a holy shrine
Where bird and beast and the Christ divine

And the heart of man have a meeting place,
Where abides the smile of God's white grace,—

An altar which after these centuried years
Between earth and heaven a pathway clears,

Whereon are burning my candles's flames
To Saint Francis, Saint Scraggles and Saint James.

It was through that heartway, from storm-tost nest,
Saint Scraggles homed in Saint James's breast.

XI.

Saint James's young heart caught the Wesley fire,
And burned in the gospel of white desire,

That Christ's free grace within every man
Might into the flame of salvation fan.

The free-grace gospel he preached to all,
Fervidest to whom did the lowest fall.

But a wider love than his church had known
On the winds of the Spirit was through him blown,—

God not alone between roofs and floors;
He was God of the birds and the Great Out Doors.

XII.

Then a storm, like that which Saint Scraggles tost!
Church, friends and home and all seemed lost.

Though he faltered some, he refused to fail,
And gave the dark fate a brave good hail.

Perhaps in his heart sang an English lark
With the song of a sunbeam lighting his dark;

As, perhaps, the sparrow whom Christ heard sing
Made on His cross some comforting.

XIII.

As men grew fierce, the wild beasts tamed;
To the heart of this man their wild eyes flamed

With the light of a love like Christ's white peace,
Giving his heart from its ache surcease.

With wild bears playing when the starlight fell,
He found in them more of heaven than hell.

The wildest wolf to his hand grew still,
And man and beast were of Christ's good will.

He love-called lions till they replied
In tones as soft as a silk-toned bride;

And each wild thing of wing or fang
In his presence leaped and smiled and sang. *

He found, when in love to the wild he cried,
In love for love they in joy replied;

And so, when Saint Scraggles needed a shrine,
Where could he find one more divine?

XIV.

On what far highways must journey feet
Sent from God's heart on our earth to meet?

How far from God's heart to Syracuse?
Why there for the meeting did the good God choose?

Why, when suns darkened and wild storms rushed,
When in fear and dread sweet singings hushed?

*The story of these references is told in George Wharton James's book, "Love's Power Over Wild Animals."

Why in a Scraggles, outcast of the street,
Did the Christ of the sparrow his Christ-man meet?

"Beauty to beauty" is our mad world's creed;
But the Gospel of Christ is "Need unto need";

And which of them needed the other most,
The man or the bird, knows the Holy Ghost.

In the Heaven of Love, the undefiled,
Or led by a bird or led by a child,

It matters not to God and His Son,
So that love is lived, so that love is done.

XV.

Reverently Scraggles was taken up
As if she had been the communion cup,

The blood in her heart, in memory of Him
Who shrines in a bird or the Seraphim.

She was tenderly borne to the warm and the dry
Where human love was her sunny sky,

Where human care made such down-soft nest
That she never missed the mother-breast.

So the home and the man and the writing hand
Was as fair to the bird as the green earth, spanned

By the blue of the sky and its wild sweet breeze;
For to Scraggles the face of the man was these.

XVI.

She had all of the house for her bird-free will,
Or on table or bed or on window sill;

But loved on the writing-hand to perch
As if for the reason of wings she'd search ;

As if she would find through that Christ-highway
The summer where darkens no stormy day ;

Where life has never a shadowing,
And blights no death to wither a wing,—

To hush a song in the discord dread
Which aches for the ones we call the dead.

XVII.

Just love in the heart and all life abliss
And a Father heart, and a face like this ;—

Like this ! O bird ; so glows Love's Face,
Or it shine on a bird or on man's disgrace !

For Christ came to earth with His Face Divine
That in brother faces we see it shine,

And know that the God in humanity
Is the only God we serve and see ;

That the heart of a child enshrines God's grace
And His Face is smiling within its face ;

That a mother-heart holds His motherhood
Wherein we know that He's kind and good.

XVIII.

Through the ways of the world I bravely go ;
For their darkest end His face will show ;

And it shall be as my mother's when
I've wanted naught but its smile again;

It shall look at me with my mother's eyes
Alight with the Love that never dies.

XIX.

With many a love-call, day or night,
And many a play of high delight,

For man and bird the days went by
As if the world had forgot to sigh.

XX.

O unsolved riddle! O love's black loss!
On the hills of Love for aye Love's cross!

What heart could not do, though the whole world end,
Befell from the man to his sweet bird friend.

An accident dire of the tragic kind,
And the eyes of Saint Scraggles in death went blind;

And the heart of the man went full of tears,
Which moisten his eyes in these after years;

And oft as the busy duties still,
He sings as his memory works its will;

*"These clumsy feet still in the mire
Go crushing blossoms without end!
These harsh well-meaning hands we thrust
Among the heart-strings of a friend!
Earth holds no balsam for mistakes!"*

*O human heart that sobs and breaks,
There comes a balsam from the skies,
Death's death is in the dear Christ's eyes!*

XXI.

Have birds in the Sky of skies some spread
To fly and sing, "There are no dead!"

Then Scaggles sings for her friend below,
That in love and joy his feet may go

Till his steps through the winding ways complete
Where the Christ in men and in sparrows meet.

Be that as it is! we hope to find
Somewhere in God's vast the true and the kind.

XXII.

The grave of Scaggles is billowed where
Or snows or flowers make the billow fair;

While Saint James lives in a sunny clime
Where the days are song and the hours are rhyme;

But never his feet to yond city go,
But at the grave of Saint Scaggles they softly slow.

What 's then in the heart of this giant man?
"God's love is greater than scheme or plan?"

Christ and sparrows make a heart's highway
Where 'tis better to love than in fear to pray;

Where e'en to a sparrow a kindness done
Makes the joy of God to our sad earth run?

Will we hear at last in Christ's sweet words,
'Ye've done to me what ye've done to birds?

No tiniest deed of love is lost,
In the joy of kind hearts, my Pentecost?' "

XXIII.

O never the hunter's way he goes!
And never he bruises a life with blows!

He loves on their stems the flowers fair;
He loves the birds in their native air;

He loves the beasts in their forests wild;
He loves man, woman and every child;

He honors as holy each other life,
As the kiss of a child or the kiss of a wife;

His religion, to make all cruelty less;
And his joy in God, to relieve distress.

'Tis in kindness done the heavens shine,
And we find in man the Christ Divine.

On the wound of a beast a kind hand laid
Shares the joy of God when that beast He made;

And to helping a bird to its nest again
The angels of God chant a sweet "Amen"!

XXIV.

Can you see how are one the far and the near,
Saint Francis's sermon, Saint James's tear?

That the Christ whose heart on Calvary bleeds
Feels the humblest sparrow's aching needs?

Saint Francis, Saint Scraggles, Saint James and you
Somehow at the heart of the mystery true

Which loves in the Christ and loves in the bird,
In each, made flesh, Divine Love's word?

So you see why my altar burns and flames
To Saint Francis, Saint Scraggles and Saint James;

Its candles, the lives of the greatest, least
Of my sisters, bird, or my brothers, beast?

O my heart unto wonderful worship flies
When I look in a bird's or a beast's bright eyes!

XXV.

With such love in my heart, such light in my eye;—
Yet the priest and the Levite, they pass me by;

And a churchless, creedless brother I roam;
And not e'en to God will my feet fleet home

Till He tells me true, that each He's made
And set in the ways of shine and shade

Shall at last find home in some holy bliss,—
O churches of men, you deny me this!

XXVI.

But, Church of the Living Christ, you give
This, the Holy Faith by which I live

In a world of strife where each man's foe,
Where the joy of one is another's woe;—

You give it in every wild bird's flight,
And the God in the sparrow is my heart's light.

So taught the Christ of the Great White Love,
And God's smile in His heart was the Holy Dove.

This love has its joy in the everywhere,
In the laugh of a child and the saint's white prayer;

In the song of a bird, in the chant of a sea;
In the wide sky's winds and their melody;

In the love of my horse that can only neigh,
And the meadowing lamb that can only play.

Oh, there in my mother's eyes, its sheen!
In her face of love, 'tis God I've seen!

XXVII.

Earth-lonely I walk, that in all, that in each
I hear some words of Divine Love's speech;

Assuring me that no least life fails,
That no hopeless man in a harsh hell wails;

Publicans, harlots and failed men,
Heartless and cruel, yet like Magdalen,

They see themselves as they ought to be
And passion through Christ that majesty;—

The women and men of the darkest sin,
Whose feet with the husks and the swine have been;

Who the hollow ways of uncleanness tread,
Till the pure in heart must call them dead,—

Assuring me that in such as these
God's Love, at last, His own child frees;

As through muck and mire come lilies bright,
So these shall walk with God in white;

That there be no lowest hell that aches,
But the Love of Christ it's dark deep takes

In such holy beauty, that every line
In the truth of God and His love doth shine;

That there be no lowest hell of shame
That will not grow clean in Love's white flame.

XXVIII.

Lonely I walk that my vision see
In every man the Christ to be;

No meanest atom escape the fire
That purifies in the Christ-desire,

Transfigured the very garment's stain
As the Christ-earth's lives their perfect gain;

My altar, Creation, whose candle rays
Are suns and stars as my bowed heart prays;—

On the self-same altar the glow worm's fire,
The least of the birds in the worship-choir;

No human chord from the music mist
As God's dear heart with our praise is kist.

Where'er is love, God's grace is there;
Holier its joy than the fear's dark prayer!

XXIX.

Something like this through these men and the bird
Has the deepest heart of me gladly heard.

Something like this is the heart of me,
When I think of my God so blissfully,

That in the bright joy of Him, I can
Think only in love of my brother-man;

Think of all life with a tenderness,
That yearns them freedom from all distress;

And knows that the Christ of men is true
To each bird that out of His Wisdom flew;

To each beast that out of His Wisdom walks;
All things the speech which His Love-Heart talks.

He is speaking these men, this bird and me;
And His eloquent heart will never be

At the end of His words until we are
More perfect than sun or flaming star;

As perfect as He in His heavens bright,
Giving a soul or a firefly light.

XXX.

When all are just to each life that breathes,
The sword of the wicked war-wrath sheathes;



As if for the reason of wings she'd search.

When our voices are gentle on every breeze,
Our acts, a beauty which each eye sees ;

When our love embosoms the broken reed
And gives to each vine its fruited meed ;

When we hallow among all living things,
As the angels through heaven on love-bright wings,—

Oh, then, is rainbowed all dark complaints,
And Joy with its aureole tells we're saints ;

But no mirror in heaven or earth can show
To the eyes that wear it that hallowed glow ;

Our face looks away from our heart that we
Light up the dark that the lost may see ;

Light up the path that the lost may trace
Their way to the Face that's behind the face.

XXXI.

O dear are we all to the Christ who heard
His Father sing in the plainest bird !

And dear to the God in whose bosom all
In the rapture of life, at last must fall.

Unto this, on my altar through days and nights
Glows every life that God's heart lights ;—

So, do you wonder that my heart flames
To Saint Francis, Saint Scraggles and Saint James?



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